

NOTE: Still open, last updated 7/13/01.

December 20, 2000

**OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT LETTER
HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICE (HSR&D)**

TARGETED PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT:

HSR&D RESEARCH ENHANCEMENT AWARD PROGRAM (REAP)

1. **Purpose:** HSR&D is interested in promoting and supporting groups of VA HSR&D investigators located at VA Medical Centers that do not contain and are not affiliated with an HSR&D Center of Excellence (COE). The goal of this program is to increase HSR&D capacity by assisting VA sites that already show promise, as demonstrated by a history of HSR&D peer reviewed research and career development funding. Funds provided under this initiative are for the creation of a core program of investigators, statisticians, economists and other social scientists to support and facilitate the development of HSR&D research projects and the training and mentoring of new HSR&D investigators.
2. REAP awards support core staff who benefit multiple investigators within the Program. Programs should be multidisciplinary incorporating Health Services Research (HSR), medicine and clinical subspecialties, biostatistics, social science and other appropriate research methodologies. Recipients of HSR&D REAP awards are expected to participate in training new investigators and to pursue new avenues of health services research. Activities supported by HSR&D REAP are to be performed in VA facilities.
3. **Eligibility:** Investigators under this initiative are to be conducting health services research in a related area. To qualify for application, there must be a minimum of two (2) VA HSR&D funded principal investigators engaged in research projects (IIR, SDR, QUERI, or special solicitations) at the time of application submission, and one (1) or more of the following for a total of three (3):
 - a. An additional VA HSR&D funded principal investigator engaged in research projects (IIR, SDR, QUERI, or special solicitations), or
 - b. An HSR&D Research Career Scientist receiving VA salary at the Research Career Scientist (RCS) or Senior Research Career Scientist (SRCS) level, or
 - c. An HSR&D Career Development awardee at the Research Career Development (RCD), Advanced Research Career Development (ARCD), Career Development Enhancement (CDE) or Associate Investigator (AI) level.

Based on FY2000 RDIS data, a list of currently eligible sites is provided in Attachment B. If your facility is not listed and you believe you are eligible to apply under this initiative, please contact Jay A. Freedman, PhD, at the number listed in paragraph 13.

4. **Goals:** The primary goal of REAP is the development of VA HSR capacity, by building on the success of non-COE facilities with significant existing HSR activity. A secondary goal of REAP is the training of new investigators. Prior success of participating investigators in training pre- and post-doctoral fellows, as well as ongoing and future plans for recruiting and training of new investigators, should be documented in the application.
5. **Pilot Projects:** As part of REAP, new and innovative research ideas can be explored as pilot projects to acquire data supporting the validity and feasibility of these ideas. Carefully conceived pilot projects are encouraged to explore novel approaches and establish feasibility for larger scale HSR projects. Investigators should clearly document in their application the “added value” that REAP funds will provide to current HSR efforts.
6. **Local Support:** The VA medical center and the Veterans Integrated Services Network (VISN) must support the HSR&D REAP application, and agree to provide a minimum 25 percent protected time for the investigator coordinating program activities.
7. **Funding:** Support may be requested for recurring costs of up to \$250,000 per year. Programs with three funded investigators will receive up to \$200,000; programs with four or more funded investigators will receive up to \$250,000. Funds for recurring costs may be used for:
 - a. Personnel costs for PhD investigators, programmers, statisticians, economists, research assistants, etc.,
 - b. Support for pilot projects or current project enhancements,
 - c. Support for trainees, and
 - d. Supplies, equipment and infrastructure support.

***NOTE:** Funds for trainees may be included in the budget, but will not be distributed until a trainee has been identified and approved by HSR&D Service.*

8. **Start-up Costs:** In addition to recurring costs, a one-time request of up to \$100,000 may be submitted for shared computer hardware and software. Requests must be well justified. Shared support by the VA medical center, VISN, or affiliated institution is encouraged and should be documented. Shared support may include cost sharing, facility renovation or equipment costs, service contracts on equipment, or personnel costs.

9. **Awards:** It is anticipated that up to six HSR&D REAP awards will be given, with funding beginning May 1, 2001. Programs will be funded for up to 5 years. If the number of qualifying projects/awards or investigators falls below three, a plan must be submitted to Headquarters describing how this deficiency will be addressed. If this deficiency is not corrected within nine months, funding will be phased out. Renewal will depend on a competitive continuation application, and upon the availability of funds.
10. **Program Performance:** Each program will be required to submit to Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Headquarters an annual budget and research performance report. Performance measures will include:
- a. Importance of major research findings from the Program,
 - b. Productivity measured by number of manuscripts accepted for publication in leading journals,
 - c. Peer-reviewed funding of investigators,
 - d. Status of the training program,
 - e. Number and quality of pilot projects underway, and
 - f. Evidence of local, national, and international recognition of the Program and/or its members. **NOTE:** Unsatisfactory performance will result in probationary status or termination of funding.
11. **Evaluation:** HSR&D REAP applications will be evaluated on the basis of the following major components:
- a. Compliance with eligibility criteria,
 - b. Scientific qualifications of the investigators affiliated with the Program,
 - c. Plans to develop new and innovative research programs to enhance the current research activities in HSR&D,
 - d. Planned training for new investigators,
 - e. Appropriateness of the budget and ability to administer the funds, and
 - f. Commitment to the Program by the VA medical center, VISN, or affiliated institution.

12. **Dates:** Deadline for receipt of applications is February 23, 2001. Proposals will be reviewed in March, and results announced by April 1, 2001.
13. **Contact:** Inquiries may be directed to Jay A. Freedman, Ph.D. at 202-408-3662, e-mail jay.freedman@mail.va.gov.

John R. Feussner, M.D., M.P.H.
Chief Research and Development Officer

Attachment

DISTRIBUTION: CO: E-mailed 12/22/00
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ATTACHMENT A

INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICATIONS

1. **General.** Applications must be complete and comprehensive as submitted. Applications will be considered incomplete and returned if they are illegible, fail to follow instructions, or if the material presented is insufficient to permit an adequate review. HSR&D Research Enhancement Award Program (REAP) applications must conform to the standardized format as outlined below and contain all pertinent information. Limit the narrative to twenty pages (20) (see Roman numerals I-VIII). Do not submit copies of funded or pending research applications of investigators. Each qualifying investigator may submit up to two journal article reprints representing their most important work. Submit six collated sets of reprints.

14. **Format.**

- a. **Forms Required.** Use VA Forms 10-1313-1 through 8, “Merit Review Application,” and VA Form 10-1436, “Research and Development Information System Project Data Sheet.” These forms are available through each VA medical facility’s Office of Research and Development (or equivalent).
- b. **Printing, Reproduction, and Assembly.** Use standard 8-1/2” by 11” white paper for pages other than forms. Type material single-spaced. Type must be easy to read (and photocopy). The minimum size for computer-generated print is 11 point (approximately 1/8 inch in height for capital letters). There may be no more than six lines of text per vertical inch and page margins must be a minimum of 1 inch. The original, which will serve as the master file copy; should be printed on a single side. Twenty copies should be duplicated back-to-back. Use a blank sheet of paper as a continuation sheet for VA forms if necessary. Use binder clips rather than rubber bands, stapling or binding to assemble each copy, and do not insert colored paper between the copies.
- c. **Pagination.** Each page should be identified by the last name of the investigator coordinating the proposed REAP and page number. Type the name of the proposed REAP Coordinator in the lower right portion of each page, followed by the sequential page number.

3. **Ordering and Content of Materials.**

- a. **VA Form 10-1313-1** (First page of the application) provides brief identifying information. Items that may require clarification are discussed below.
 - 1) Items 1 and 2. Leave blank.
 - 2) Item 3. Identify review group as “HREAP.”
 - 3) Item 4. Insert “April 2001” as review date.
 - 4) Item 5. Insert the number of the facility (or lead facility if a consortium).
 - 5) Item 6. Specify the location of the facility (or lead facility if a consortium).
 - 6) Item 7. Social Security number of proposed HSR&D REAP Coordinating Investigator. The Coordinating Investigator is considered to be the Principal Investigator (PI) for the program, and is the person responsible for overall direction of planned activities.

- 7) Item 8. Leave blank—not applicable.
- 8) Item 9. Type the last name of the proposed HSR&D REAP Coordinating Investigator (PI) in capital letters, followed by the first name and initial(s). Specify the individual's degrees and list their telephone number and e-mail address.
- 9) Item 10. The title should not exceed 72 typewritten spaces. It should assist the reader in quickly identifying the theme of the REAP.
- 10) Item 11. The amount requested each year should be the same as the totals for individual fiscal years, as listed on VA Form 10-1313-4. The total is the total funding (in direct costs only) that is being requested for all years (not to exceed 5 years).
- 11) Item 12. Check the appropriate box for the Coordinating Investigator VA employment.
- 12) Item 13. Check the box for Coordinating Investigator salary source.
- 13) Item 14. Check the appropriate box for "new" project.
- 14) Item 16. Insert the code(s) for the primary research program and the primary specialty area that apply to the proposed Coordinating Investigator. The code(s) should be the same as that reported to VA's Research and Development Information System (RDIS).
- 15) Items 17, 18, 20, and 21. Provide information for proposed Coordinating Investigator.
- 16) Item 19. Complete fully.
- 17) Signatures. An original, dated signature of the proposed Coordinating Investigator (PI) is required. This date should provide sufficient subsequent time for review by the ACOS for R&D or equivalent. An original, dated signature of the ACOS for R&D, or designee, also is required. In signing, this person certifies that the proposal is administratively complete and all required reviews have been conducted. ***Type in telephone number and e-mail address of ACOS or other individual to contact for any administrative issues (insert name in parentheses if not ACOS for Research).***

b. **VA Form 10-1313-2** (Second page of the proposal).

- 1) Identifying Information. Check the appropriate box to indicate that you are describing a program. Provide the identifying information requested: HSR&D Coordinating Investigator; facility name and location; and program title (maximum of 72 characters and spaces). Abstract (500 words maximum). The abstract should provide a clear, concise overview of the proposed Program: theme and research foci; initial strategic goals and objectives; and general approach for addressing goals and objectives. List KEY WORDS that best describe the program's scientific discipline(s) and research foci.

c. **Table of Contents** (Third page of the proposal) **and Proposal Narrative** (Fourth and subsequent pages) Use the following designated Roman numerals and headings for the Table of Contents and Narrative. Specify the beginning page number for each of the required sections, as ordered below, in the Table of Contents. Use the suggested page allocations as a guide for the narrative section (unless specified as a maximum), but in any case do ***not exceed 20 total maximum narrative pages, including organization chart, tables and lists specified below but exclusive of VA forms, appendices, and table of contents.***

- I. Executive Summary. (one page maximum) Provide a clear and concise overview of the

proposed REAP mission statement, theme, and research foci and rationale. Identify key health services research issues to be addressed during the initial funding period. Highlight the strengths of the REAP leadership and proposed infrastructure and plans for addressing any weaknesses. Conclude by highlighting the perceived “added value” of the proposed REAP for HSR&D and VHA.

II. REAP Focus. (one page) Discuss the proposed REAP’s mission statement, key theme, and one to three selected research areas serving as the driving force for the initial five-year funding period. Discuss the importance and appropriateness of the theme and research foci to the overall HSR&D portfolio and the nation’s veterans. Describe how you expect the REAP to contribute to HSR&D and VHA in the next five years.

III. Initial Five-Year Plan. (three pages) Outline anticipated strategic goals and objectives for the five-year funding period, and the operational plan envisioned for integrating clinical, educational, and research resources to accomplish these goals and objectives. Articulate how the core support funding will provide “added value” in terms of potential contributions to local and system-wide HSR&D activities (emphasizing research, linking research with practice, and contributions to local, VISN-wide and national VA HSR&D needs).

IV. Projects Planned. (one page per project maximum; total maximum three pages) Describe one to three specific research ideas planned for REAP and the proposed investigators for each. Specify whether the proposed PI currently is a VA employee or will be recruited, and include the research question, or hypothesis to be addressed, theoretical/conceptual framework for the approach envisioned, design, general analytic approach, and anticipated contribution to the REAP’s selected focus.

V. Related Ongoing Projects. (one page) If proposed REAP investigators already have related funded projects, submitted proposals, or HSR&D letters of intent, list these, specifying: the nature of the item (funded, submitted, LOI), actual or expected funding source (e.g., VA HSR&D), funding amount and funding period. Include a sentence or two about each project’s contribution to the initial five-year plan. Include in Appendix 2 the project abstract (for submitted proposals), letter of intent, or VA Form 10-1436 (for funded projects).

VI. HSR&D Leadership and Capacity. (10 pages, exclusive of VA forms) This section is designed to document the applicant’s health services research qualifications and capability to meet the identified objectives and contribute to local and national health services research capacity and training activities.

- (a) Summarize the proposed REAP’s current (and expected) health services research capabilities and how they will contribute to meeting identified objectives and contribute to local and national health services research capacity and training activities. (one page)
- (b) Provide an organization chart depicting key staff and their relationships within the REAP and medical facility. (one page)
- (c) List REAP (proposed and/or identified) core staff and provide a one-paragraph description of their positions, related responsibilities and related research or other

- pertinent expertise. (one-two pages)
- (d) Present an overview of staff in tabular form (see example, Table 1). (one page)

TABLE 1: HSR&D REAP CORE STAFF ORGANIZATION

<u>Name/Position</u>	<u>Personnel Qualifications</u>	<u>FTE</u>
SUSAN S. SMITH, highest degree REAP Coordinating Investigator	Academic field x years, teaching y years, clinical z years, research (major research interests)	0.5 (contributed)
JOHN D. DOE, highest degree Biostatistician	Academic field x years, teaching y years, research (major research interests)	0.6
Research Assistant, degree (or Statistician, Computer Programmer, Program Assistant)	x years experience	1.0

- (e) Provide a brief statement regarding the planned role(s) of the REAP Steering Committee. (one page) Append:
- (1) A brief description of the Steering Committee's structure, membership, functions, meeting schedule (of the whole and for subcommittees), and relationship(s) to the medical facility director, the REAP, and other faculty committees (and any established sub-committees).
 - (2) A listing of Steering Committee members (actual and anticipated), differentiating Regular (such as facility/Network, affiliations/consultants) and Ex Officio (such as REAP leadership and other key staff) members. Provide the name, position or title, institution, and telephone numbers for each person listed.
- (f) Elaborate on additional organizational/operational details. These should include:
- (1) Describe local review procedures for research projects and reports. (half page)
 - (2) Briefly discuss career paths for non-clinician professional staff, including affiliated university practices for REAP core staff who may also be university faculty members. (half page)
 - (3) Describe and document the commitment of the medical facility (or consortium of facilities) to the REAP, and indicate how the involvement of other collaborating scientific groups (or facilities) will be managed routinely. (one to two pages)
- (g) Facilities and Other Resources. (about one page)
- (1) List community institutions--including academic collaborators with well-

established expertise in health services research methodologies--that are expected to support the REAP's activities. In Appendix 5, provide the name, telephone number, and mailing address of the expected liaison person for each institution. Also append any negotiated memoranda of understanding, signed by the appropriate officials of each participating institution.

- (2) Describe available facilities for the REAP (including plans for new or renovated space, if applicable), major items of equipment, and maintenance requirements. Provide estimates of contributed (or requested) costs.
 - (3) Describe VA institutional and other sector support committed to (or expected for) the REAP, beyond that requested through this application. Briefly discuss how this support will help accomplish the REAP's objectives (e.g., availability of large-scale databases for analyses, access to technical capabilities residing in affiliated facilities, and other Network capabilities or capacities).
- d. **Total Core Budget Request.** Use VA Forms 10-1313-3 and 10-1313-4, to summarize the requested budget. Insert one set of forms here: a total summary of resources identified with REAP core activities, for which resources are requested in this application.
- e. **Biographical Sketches and Individual Support.** Provide a biographical sketch and a list of up to ten recent or significant publications for each of the Center's key VA and non-VA collaborating staff, using VA Forms 10-1313-5 and 10-1313-6, respectively.
- f. **Appendices.** Appendices are limited as follows, and should be inserted, numbered, and labeled as specified below. *Appendices, exclusive of VA forms, should not exceed thirty pages.*
- (1) Appendix 1. Current and Pending VA and Non-VA Research Support. For proposed staff, list each person's current and pending total VA and non-VA research support (if applicable), including funding period dates for all items listed, using **VA Form 10-1313-7**. (Pending requests should be included, even if there is no current support.) Add **VA Form 10-1313-8** only when needed to elaborate information as requested in Form 10-1313-7.
 - (2) Appendix 2. Related Ongoing Projects. Insert project abstract (for submitted proposals), HSR&D letter of intent, or VA Form 10-1436 (for funded projects).
 - (3) Appendix 3. Steering Committee. Description of role, membership.
 - (4) Appendix 4. Letters of Commitment. Append a formal letter of commitment for all non-VA investigators who will become active collaborators with the Center's research program. Include their academic title. List consultants and indicate for each: nature of the service to be performed; fee and amount of travel and per diem for each consultant; and the number of consultations to be provided. Append a letter from each consultant who has agreed to perform this service.
 - (5) Appendix 5. Memoranda of Understanding. Append Memoranda of Understanding with collaborating institutions.
 - (6) Appendix 6. Medical Facility Endorsement. Append endorsement letter from the medical facility Director (lead facility and any other involved medical facilities).
 - (7) Appendix 7. VISN Director Endorsement. Append endorsement letter from the VISN Director.

NOTE: No other letters of endorsement should be sought or included; if included, they will not be considered

4. **Submission.** Submit (by mail) the original application plus twenty copies of the proposal to:

HSR&D REAP
VA Headquarters (124E)
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

5. **Due Date.** Proposals received after the due date of February 23, 2001 (and applications from facilities that fail to notify HSR&D by January 19, 2001 of their intent to apply) will not be reviewed. HSR&D will confirm receipt of intent to apply and proposals via facsimile or e-mail to the proposed REAP Coordinator and ACOS for Research and Development (or designated contact listed beside ACOS signature at the end of VA form 10-1313-1, first application page). Proposals will be reviewed in April. Approved sites will be notified no later than April 1, 2001, with funding of approved sites May 1, 2001.

HSR&D ADMINISTRATIVE CHECKLIST FOR HSR&D REAP PROPOSAL

PROPOSAL FROM _____
(site) / (proposed REAP Coordinator)

Unbound original and twenty copies received
In HQ, HSR&D by due date (February 23, 2001) _____

Notice of Intent to apply received in HQ, HSR&D by January 19, 2001 _____

[NOTE: IF EITHER OF ABOVE TWO CONDITIONS IS NOT MET, MARK "NO" ABOVE
AND RETURN MATERIALS TO SENDER]

VA Form 10-1313-1 complete (p. 1) _____
Proposed REAP Coordinator is 5/8ths VA _____

VA Form 10-1313-2 (page 2) _____

Table of Contents (page 3) _____

Narrative (no more than 20 pages)
(including org chart, table 1--but excluding contents, Forms, appendices) _____

I. Executive summary included and maximum one page _____

II. REAP Focus Section (included, no more than one page) _____

III. Five-Year Plan (included, no more than three pages) _____

IV. Projects Planned --up to three described
--none exceed one page _____
--total descriptions maximum 3 pages _____

V. Related Ongoing Projects List (one page) _____

VI. HSR&D Leadership and Capacity
(12 pages maximum, exclusive of VA forms) _____
a. summary of hsr capabilities (one page) _____
b. organization chart _____
c. core staff list, description _____
REAP Coordinator at least 5/8ths VA & allocating .5 FTEE _____
d. staff overview (Table 1) _____
e. steering Committee description & membership _____
f. organizational Details _____

-description of local review procedures for research projects and reports (about 1/2 page)	_____
-description, non-clinician professional career paths	_____
-commitment—medical facility & collaborators (about one page)	_____
g. facilities and other resources (about one page)	_____
--list of collaborating institutions	_____
--description of available & contributed resources includes medical care salary support for physician director or associate director	_____
--description of any other support & utility to REAP	_____
Total Core Budget Request (VA Forms 10-1313-3 and 4)	_____
Biographical Sketches and Individual Support (VA Forms 10-1313-5 and 6 for each of the REAP VA and non-VA collaborating staff)	_____
Appendices (Do not exceed thirty pages, exclusive of VA forms)	_____
Appendix 1. (VA Forms 10-1313-7, and 8 if appropriate)	_____
Appendix 2. Ongoing projects (Abstracts, HSR&D LoIs or VA Form 10-1436)	_____
Appendix 3. Steering committee description, membership list	_____
Appendix 4. Letters of Commitment from non-VA collaborators	_____
Appendix 5. Memoranda of Understanding with Collaborating Institutions	_____
Appendix 6. Medical Facility Endorsement letter (signed by director or appropriate designee)	_____
Appendix 7. VISN Director Endorsement (signed and dated)	_____
<i>No other letters of endorsement included</i> (if included—remove)	_____
Appendix 9. Statement of Authorization to Share Materials	_____

ATTACHMENT B

LIST OF ELIGIBLE VA MEDICAL CENTERS (Based on FY2000 RDIS Data)

Cleveland, OH

Indianapolis, IN

Iowa City, IA

Miami, FL

Philadelphia, PA

San Francisco, CA

Tampa, FL

West Haven, CT